

In every fickle breeze to play,
Wildly, weakly, idly, gay,
So feebly framed, so lightly hung,
By the wing of an insect stirred and swung;
Thrilling e'en to a redbreast's note,
Drooping if only a light mist float,
Brightened and dimmed like a varying glass,
As shadow or sunbeam chance to pass :—

"I would not be
A leaf on yonder Aspen tree.
It is not because the Autumn sere
Would change my merry guise and cheer—
That soon, full soon, nor leaf, nor stem,
Sunlight would gladden, or dew-drop gem,
That I with my fellows, must fall to the earth,
Forgotten our beauty and breezy mirth,
Or else on the bough where all had grown,
Must linger on, and linger alone;
Might life be an endless summer's day,
And I be for ever green and gay,
I would not be, I would not be
A leaf on yonder Aspen tree!
Proudly spoken, heart of mine,
Yet weakness and change perchance are thine,
More, and darker, and sadder to see
Than befall the leaves of yonder tree!
What if they flutter—thy life is a dance!
Or toy with the sunbeam—they live in his glance;
To bird, breeze, and insect, rustle and thrill,
Never the same, never mute, never still,—
Emblems of all that is fickle and gay,
But leaves in their birth, but leaves in decay—
Chide them not—heed them not—spirit, away;
Into thyself, to thine own hidden shrine,
What there dost thou worship? what deem'st thou
divine?

Thy hopes—are they steadfast, and holy and high?
Are they built on a rock? are they raised to the sky?
Thy deep secret yearnings—oh, whither point they,
To the triumphs of earth, to the toys of a day?—
Thy friendships and feelings,—doth impulse prevail
To make them, and mar them, as wind swells the
sail?—

Thy life's ruling passion—thy being's first aim—
What are they? and yield they contentment or
shame?

Spirit, proud spirit, ponder thy state,
If thine the leaf's lightness, not thine the leaf's fate.
It may flutter, and glisten, and wither, and die,
And heed not our pity, and ask not our sigh:
But for thee, the immortal, no winter may throw
Eternal repose on thy joys, or thy woe;
Thou must live—live for ever—in glory or gloom—
Beyond the world's precincts—beyond the dark
tomb;

Look to thyself, then, ere past is Hope's reign,
And looking and longing alike are in vain;
Lest thou deem it a bliss to have been or to be,
But a fluttering leaf on yon aspen tree."

The Black Poplar (*Populus nigra*) is also
celebrated in fable: Ovid says, when Phaëton
borrowed the chariot horses of the sun, and by his
careless driving set half the world on fire, he was
hurled from the chariot by Jupiter into the Po,
where he was drowned; and his sisters, the He-
liades, wandering on the banks of the river, were
changed into trees, supposed by some writers to be
poplars." The evidence in favor of the poplar
consists in there being abundance of black pop-